

Volume 216, number 1

FEBS LETTERS

May 1987

and final part of the book deals with various aspects of the diseased states.

The morphology section starts with an historical review of the early years of research into an understanding of the IPM. We are then introduced to the modern concepts of the morphology of IPM as shown by rapid freezing techniques and finally the observation that there are domains of IPM material that are specifically associated with cone but not rod inner and outer segments.

The biochemistry and cell biology includes 8 chapters which attempt to describe and explain such complexities as the presence of IRBP and specific phosphodiesterases together with more general observations. The final section on disease states discusses the possible involvement of the IPM in retinal disease in relation to research findings.

Mike Boulton

## *Superoxide and Superoxide Dismutase in Chemistry, Biology and Medicine*

(Proceedings of the Fourth International Conference)

Edited by G. Rotilio

*Elsevier Science Publishers; Amsterdam, New York, Oxford, 1986*

xxi + 688 pages. £129.75 (£86.50 approx)

I must begin by confessing that I am not absolutely impartial in reviewing this book, since I attended the conference on which it is based. However, I have been asked to review the book on the (perhaps dubious) grounds that I did not submit a paper for publication in the proceedings.

The Fourth International Conference on Superoxide and Superoxide Dismutase in Chemistry, Biology and Medicine was held in Rome on September 1st–6th, 1985. The proceedings have thus appeared rather late, which is surprising since camera-ready format has been used. This has led to ugly differences in typeface in many parts of the book, despite its attractive cover and the good quality paper used for printing.

I can testify that the Conference itself was excellently organised, with many first-rate presentations and plenty of useful discussions and interactions between the participants. That said, I must question the value of publishing the proceedings at all. Most of this volume consists of short papers (usually about 5 pages) in which the

authors summarize, with inadequate descriptions of methodology, data that have already appeared elsewhere in the literature. None of the authors had the space to relate their work to the field in general. There was no attempt to report any of the discussion that took place, not even a 'state of the art' summary by a chairman. Reports of the clinical use of superoxide dismutase to treat arthritis, radiation damage and autoimmune disease first appeared many years ago, and several such reports re-occur in the present volume. However, I have yet to see a well-controlled clinical trial published in a leading medical journal, such as *Lancet* or *New England Journal of Medicine*, and I feel that publication anywhere of anything short of this should now be firmly discouraged.

Despite my enthusiasm for the conference, and my high regard for the efforts of the organisers, I cannot recommend this volume as a good buy. The price of approximately 12.5 pence per page of text makes it even less so.

B. Halliwell